



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Central Coast Region

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TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Roger W. Briggs
Executive Officer

DATE: June 28, 2007

SUBJECT: POSTPONING STAFF EFFORTS TO PREPARE THE APTOS CREEK AND VALENCIA CREEK SEDIMENT TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) FOR REGIONAL BOARD APPROVAL

Water Board staff completed a Preliminary Project Report for the Aptos Creek and Valencia Creek Sediment TMDL (Report) in September 2004. The Report addressed Aptos and Valencia Creeks and their main tributaries: Mangels Gulch, Bridge Creek, and Trout Gulch.

The Report included an analysis of sediment sources in the Aptos Watershed. Staff concluded that roads, bank erosion, mass wasting, and urban and rural lands were the sources contributing to the exceedance of water quality objectives related to sediment. Staff also reported an estimation of the amount of each source load that was attributed to anthropogenic activities. Additionally, the analysis showed that hydromodification of the watershed had a pronounced effect on the fate and transport of sediment from all source categories.

Water Board staff stopped working on this project due to staff vacancies during fiscal year 2005-2006. During this fiscal year, 2006-2007, staff decided to address the Aptos and Valencia Creeks sediment impairment from urban lands by working with Stormwater staff. Staff is working to include management measures that address the Aptos and Valencia Creeks sediment impairment in the Santa Cruz County Stormwater Management Program (SWMP). This work has been in lieu of completing the next phase of TMDL development for this project. This SWMP is scheduled to go before the Water Board for approval in 2008. The following paragraphs explain this decision.

Staff concluded that if the management practices that address the sediment impairment from urban lands in Aptos and Valencia Creeks are added to the Santa Cruz County SWMP and the goals of the SWMP are achieved, the impairment will be sufficiently addressed. Therefore, staff working on the TMDL, chose to leverage resources to directly promote measures to resolve the

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impairment, by working with Stormwater Program staff who are currently reviewing and guiding development of the Santa Cruz County SWMP.

The comment period for the SWMP is currently in progress. Staff concluded it is more efficient to make changes to the SWMP during the comment period, rather than to wait until after the SWMP is adopted. We would miss this opportunity if staff were to continue to develop the TMDL in lieu of coordinating with the timing and priority to establish the Santa Cruz County SWMP.

Staff also considers this as an opportunity to use this watershed as a model for making water quality improvement decisions based on a water quality assessment. Management measures required in SWMPs are not always based on the type of analyses conducted for this watershed and with this type of data. In this case, staff developed the data (in the TMDL Report) to support the conclusions regarding sediment impairment and management strategies to resolve the impairment.

This approach also provides the County with the opportunity to establish actions and requirements to meet any future allocations and obligations required by TMDL in the future.

Finally, the Water Board has limited resources in the TMDL Program and over 100 additional waterbodies with water quality problems identified on the 2006 Clean Water Act 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments (the List of Impaired Waters). This is an opportunity to use existing authority and resources from another program (Stormwater in this case) to resolve the water quality problems in this watershed. Similarly, this allows staff to preserve TMDL Program resources for addressing other water quality problems.

Given these circumstances, Water Board staff have postponed preparation of the Aptos Creek and Valencia Creek Sediment TMDL for approval by the Regional Board.

Water Board staff will reassess preparation of the TMDL at one or more of the following junctures: If, after working with Stormwater Program staff, we determine the SWMP is not a feasible option for resolving the sediment impairment; during TMDL Program planning for fiscal year 2008-2009 in February 2008; during TMDL Program review at the end of the 2007 to 2008 fiscal year; after evaluation of Santa Cruz County compliance with Stormwater regulations through review of their annual reports for the SWMP (the first report is due one year after adoption of the SWMP).

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The List of Impaired Waters includes a subset of water bodies designated as "Water Quality Segments Being Addressed by Other Actions Than TMDLs." Staff may recommend that the Aptos and Valencia Creeks sediment listings be placed in this subset during the 2008 Update of the List of Impaired Waters.

For additional information about postponing development of the Aptos and Valencia Creeks Sediment TMDLS, please call Water Board staff person Kim Sanders, at 805-542-4771.

The status of this TMDL project is posted on the Water Board website at:
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/TMDL/303dandTMDLprojects.htm>

cc: Dave Giuliano, TMDL Coordinator, US Environmental Protection Agency
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Aptos and Valencia Creeks Sediment TMDL IPL

